

**Safety and Aesthetics in Urban Roadway Design
Interdisciplinary Group Meeting**

Sep 15, 2004, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

WSDOT Lakewood Maintenance Facility - Conference Room

Members in attendance:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Dave Olson	WSDOT – HQ Design Office	360-705-7952
John Milton	WSDOT – HQ Design Office	360-705-7299
Anna St. Martin	WSDOT – HQ Design Office	360-705-7453
Jim Eastman	WSDOT – HQ Design Office	360-705-7253
Scott Zeller	WSDOT – HQ Traffic Office	206-705-7986
Mark Maurer	WSDOT – HQ Landscape Office	360-705-7242
Darlene Sharar	WSDOT – HQ Design Office	360-705-7251
King Cushman	PSRC - Seattle	206-464-6174
Rich Meredith	City of Shoreline	206-546-2403
Mike Johnson	City of Seattle	206-684-5187
Shane DeWald	City of Seattle	206-684-5041
Don Peterson	FHWA – Olympia	360-534-9323
Jim Seitz	AWC – Olympia	360-753-4137
Samih Shilbayeh	WSDOT – HQ Design Office	360-705-7264

Welcome and Introduction:

Samih Shilbayeh welcomed everyone to the meeting and requested that the attendees introduce themselves. After the introduction, Samih talked briefly about agenda items: intended audience for documents, addressing different needs, the background of the document and what has been accomplished so far. Samih mentioned that the objective of this meeting is to address any new comments and getting the document ready for statewide review. The document schedule shows the statewide review process should start since lots of chapters have been finalized, and that the date projected for statewide review is near (September 21st). Some of the document material will be used during the first Context Sensitive Design training session on September 21st in the NW Region.

Intended audience for document(s):

Samih mentioned that the plan is to produce two documents. One is “Understanding Flexibility in Transportation Design – Washington,” with detailed discussion on each topic. The second will be a summary document that summarizes the divisions and chapters of the larger document. The main document is nearly ready for statewide review and the effort to compile the summary document will start during the progress of statewide review.

Addressing the differing needs:

Dave talked about the plan of having a summary document based on a request from Al King – CRAB. The intended audience of the summary document includes those who are looking to get an overview of the Context Sensitive Design concept without going into much detail. The summary document will be about 15 – 20 pages, and will highlight the

main points of tradeoffs discussions and collaboration efforts with agencies and stakeholders.

King Cushman agrees with the summary document approach, and suggested including a page in the back directing the reader to the detailed document. King also recommends hiring a professional writer to help produce the summary document. He mentioned that it is good to clarify who the intended audience is. The summary document should be clear and simple for readers who want to get an overview. The table of Contents will summarize document's content and will guide the reader to information in the main document, showing links, examples, and exhibits.

Status of document:

The majority of the chapters within the document are ready for statewide review. There are some chapters that have comments that need to be addressed; these may be addressed during the statewide review phase.

The group raised one question about using the document for the planning process. Jim Seitz mentioned that a planning document already exists, namely the "Building Projects that Build Communities" document.

There was a suggestion to look at chapters where the Flexibility document affects certain audiences, such as the liability chapter and traffic calming chapter. Finalize these chapters by clarifying content, send out to statewide review, and get recommendations from statewide review and share with IDG members.

Progress since last meeting:

All action items from the previous meeting have been or are being addressed. The document is now following the new format, some chapters have been separated as recommended, the document has been reorganized as discussed, and the comments received to date are being incorporated. The review process participation from IDG members on materials sent for review has been low, and to be more effective requires more effort from IDG members.

Status of individual chapters:

The following web link summarizes the status of each individual chapter. Overall the document is about 90% completed and ready for statewide review. Most chapters are 100% completed and ready for statewide review.

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/eesc/design/Urban/StatusReport2.htm>

There is a need to revise some chapters and reduce the content of some chapters by consolidating material, such as the information in the traffic calming chapter and roadway chapter. Add local pictures that help to communicate the content.

Review comments overview:

Rich asked about where the review comments end up? Anna responded that some of comments came electronically and some come in hard copy, and that these comments have been compiled into a single copy of each chapter. The comments in these "marked-

up” versions are then responded to, such as adding a comment that indicates the editors agree with the identified need for change, and will be addressing the issue. These versions are saved, prior to any of the comments and edits being addressed or accepted. Shane requested more time to review some chapters; Dave mentioned that from prior experience this is not working well to meet schedule target dates.

The legal responsibility and liability chapter I-2 was discussed in some detail. John mentioned that policy decisions made by the commission or by council members are generally not challenged, however other project level decisions are frequently challenged. King made a comment that when we change policy we still need to raise awareness of those changes.

Rich talked about the decision-making process and ways to change standards. John mentioned that when it is the time for decision-making, the backup information supporting decisions needs to be documented. Some design process a deviation to vary from standards. If there is a need to deviate, you need to do what you can to mitigate the impacts, however you cannot always mitigate. You need to evaluate the situations on case-by-case basis. Once approved, a deviation applies to a single project and must be re-evaluated on the next project in that area.

John also asked the group to suggest any improvements or additions to support document contents such as in the decision-making process in addition to Chapter I-2. Rich noticed that some material overlaps with the Traffic Calming chapter. Mike added a perspective that the proposed document offers public works agencies some insight on what changes may be adopted by FHWA in downtown environments and what the benefits are for WSDOT.

John supports finalizing the document and proceeding toward statewide review in the absence of some of the chapters.

Schedule:

The current schedule has some dates overlapping with some review activities and will be updated accordingly. There was some discussion in the meeting about target dates and milestones, and Samih mentioned that some of these milestones are targets but not actual deadlines. The statewide review process is still scheduled as planned.

Revisions, comments, and discussion:

John mentioned that there will be some revisions after publication of the document and there will be some changes over time. John, Rich, and Shane will work on finalizing and assembling all information pertaining to the Legal Responsibility and Liability chapter and then incorporate them into the document. Anna mentioned that the Documenting the Decision-Making Process chapter should be included in the discussion.

King talked about priority and time, the best way to incorporate all comments, general electronic responses from the audience that at times leave gaps in the review process, and the need to identify these gaps. King also mentioned that the Access chapter talked about

the responsibility of state highway and county roads ownership and what needs more comments to clarify content. We cannot control land use. John responded it is all about reality. John mentioned that the information in the Legal Responsibility and Liability chapter was completed with coordination with the Attorney's General's office.

Shane proposed a mechanism to weigh pros and cons in the process for decision-making. King mentioned that expectations are based on arguments on things being done predictability to eliminate surprises. He added that the standard deviation methodology should be incorporated in the Legal Liability chapter discussion.

Mike Johnson mentioned that engineering staff wants to be more specific in decision making and using information other than the WSDOT *Design Manual*. The County Road Administration Board and cities are not likely to view this as a change of policy impacting environmental issues or related issues, but may understand how it influences engineering judgment. King mentioned that the intent is not to repeat the content of *Design Manual*. Groups such as legislative committees may refer to information in this document and ask, what we are doing about this? Or, "What's different from the *Design Manual*?" The answer may be that it offers more flexible direction that helps your community.

References:

Samih mentioned that this item was left over from last meeting. What sort of reference are we going to have for exhibits? Anna replied that there would be figure numbers and a title and city location for each photograph and a number and title for all other figures. John indicated that additional information about who supplied each figure would be provided in a table in the back of the document.

Publication and distribution:

King mentioned that this is going to be a challenging job to accomplish the statewide review and recommended finding extra resources such as a consultant to work on different format of the final product.

Mike Johnson supported the approach by Dave of having multiple documents since that will help the reader on the level of details needed. Shane envisioned the summary having fewer changes over time than the detailed document.

King suggested an option for incorporating comments that is based on the flow of the chapters that outlines what to expect and when to expect it. Then a list of comments can be tallied, compiling everything in statewide master list and then seeking concurrence from the IDG group on the incorporation of comments within the document.

John mentioned that the fundamental thing, which is the content of what people want to say, and how it fits within the general document. Mike Johnson prefers to have reviewers' comments and to compile all comments and share with IDG members for final review.

Dave has a perception that we won't get lots of comments. Jim talked about a need to address that this document is under review during the APAW conference in Kennewick on Oct 20th, Brian Walsh will talk about that and will introduce the need to review document

Next Steps:

- o IDG members will continue to send comments on chapters under review; Samih and Anna will incorporate these comments and send them to statewide review.
- o Work on a methodology to compile statewide review comments and share it with IDG members.
- o Hire a professional writer to review document for publication and distribution.
- o Ask for more feedback and check on other effort from other states on the Context Sensitive Design. There is a national web site on CSD, the link is
- o <http://www.contextsensitivesolutions.org/content/gen/state-profiles/wa>
There is lots of information with a list of several case studies. More information will be added in addition to a link to the finalized "Understanding Flexibility in Transportation Design – Washington" document.
- o Next meeting after statewide review based on information which may take ½ day or a whole day.
- o If IDG members cannot resolve an issue over content review via email, a suggestion is to have a meeting to discuss.
- o Suggestion by John Milton to use the same group members for the "In Service Evaluation" document research effort.

Wrap Up:

Even though the document is not 100% complete, the group agreed that the document is ready for statewide review. The proposed strategy to start the statewide review effort includes sending several completed batches of divisions to the statewide review group. The plan is to complete statewide review by early November. Final review by an expert technical writer will follow, prior to publication and distribution toward the end of November. Once the review is completed, Samih will plan another meeting in 2-3 months to focus on sharing the results of the statewide review, finalizing the statewide review effort, and getting IDG member comments.

Action Items:

- Samih and Anna will continue updating web site as comments are incorporated and the formatting is applied. The link to the server containing the most current version of the document is
<http://test.wsdot.wa.gov/EESC/Design/StatewideReview/>
- The link to the Urban Policy Development web site, which will be updated less frequently, is
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/eesc/design/Urban/StatusReport2.htm>
IDG members need to complete comments on document and return to Samih Shilbayeh or Anna St. Martin.
- Comments may be submitted either electronically or paper based (please send only

the pages containing comments). The paper based comments may be sent to Samih Shilbayeh at the address below:
Samih Shilbayeh, WSDOT Design Office PO Box 47329 Olympia, WA 98504-7329

The next meeting is expected to be around the middle of November. Samih will keep IDG members updated on the date and location.
Meeting adjourn at 11:40 pm